Community Psychology

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• Meaning & scope

→ very similar to env. psychology

→ sociology & social work

Community Psychology is concerned with relationship bet. individuals & their social & community env. Community Psychologists contribute to public welfare through collaborative interventions that prevent psychological & social problems and promote personal & community well being & empower disadvantaged citizens & groups. The term community psychology got evolved at Swampscott conference (US). The field developed in mid 1960s as a reaction against the limitations of traditional intra psychological approaches to research and solution finding on social problems. The developers of the field emphasise the imp. of social context & social env. in the understanding of beh. & social problems. Community Psychology focuses on strength based approach rather than deficit based approach to research and action & emphasise on the imp. of the prevention of the problem rather than treatment of the problem.

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Comm. Psychology shares with Psychology an emphasis on the influence of structural features of the env. on human beh. but it differs from sociology in that it has greater focus on the individual and has got greater applied orientation than sociology.

It shares with social work a focus on helping the individual in a community but it differs from social work in that, it lays emphasis on empirical research, systems level change & prevention. The distinctive aspects of community psychology include:

(i) Its guiding values
(ii) Its ecological multi-level framework
(iii) Its focus on prevention, promotion of well beings, group empowerment & social change.

* Guiding Values of community Psychology

(i) Individual wellness
↳ This includes physical, psychological, social & spiritual health of the individuals.

(ii) Social justice & empowerment
↳ The focus is on equitable distribution of economic, political & psychological resources in the society.

(iii) Sense of community
↳ citizen's sense of belonging to the larger group.

→ (Public Goods dilemma)

(iv) Citizen Participation
↳ Active involvement of the citizens in the various aspects of community life

(v) Respect for human diversity
↳ genuine appreciation of human differences such as

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ethnicity, gender, social orientation, religion, age, physical disability & social class.

(vi) Collaboration & community strengths

↳ This implies working together with citizens & groups in community & building their strengths.

(vii) Empirical Grounding

The research in community Psychology aims at making tve diff. in the communities & the larger society.

* Roles performed by Community Psychologists

3 roles:

(i) Mental Health Consultant
(ii) Participant Conceptualizer
(iii) Social Change agent

These 3 roles are not mutually exclusive or watertight compartment. In fact a community psychologist plays more than one of these three roles & at times all 3 roles together.

(i) Mental Health Consultant

↳ Teach some people

↳ Mental Health Consultation has been defined as a helping process, educational process & a growth process achieved through interpersonal relations

A mental health consultant may assist the care-givers of the community to utilize mental health principles in their own work. They may also help care givers recognise the symptoms of mental illness & to assist them in making appropriate referrals to mental health specialists when required. It should be noted that mental

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health consultants do not try to teach specialised professional techniques like psychodiagnostic & psychotherapy procedures to caregivers. MHC teaches them the general techniques of identification & diagnosis and some elementary treatment.

In addition to the knowledge of psychotherapy, an expertise in the techniques of consultation. The psychologists who function as mental health cons. should have comprehensive understanding of social & developmental Psychology as well as various forms of social deviation through MH consultation, psychologists can help professional workers to become more sensitive to the needs of their clients & more effective in their relationship with them.

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(i) MHC → caregiver

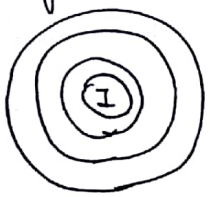
(ii) Participant Conceptualiser

↳ Mental Health

(iii) Social Change Agent

↳ He is himself he involved in the change process

(i) Ecological Approach



Individual (I)

(ii) Diversity

(iii) Prevention

(iv) Community mental Health

(v) Interdisciplinary approach

(vi) Applied Discipline

⇒ Culturally Congruent Intervention (Ecological Approach)

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(ii) Participant Conceptualiser

↳ As PC, the task of a community Psychologist is to help community leaders analyse mental health & other problems in the terms of social system variables of their community. After the problem has been clarified, he may function as mental health consultant to formulate meaningful programmes to alleviate the problems. As PC, he understands that any innovative solution, he proposes, may be opposed by the ~~system~~ vested interests in the system and therefore in proposing solutions, he takes into cognisance, the likely quarters of resistance & makes sure that interventions suggested are culturally congruent & ecologically valid.

(iii) Social Change Agent

↳ Working as SCA, community psychologists directly go to the field, understand the problem firsthand & then try to develop methods of intervention. As SCA, they do not work in the institutions that are associated with mental health development. They work in schools, settlement houses, city centers, slums & related settings. Therefore, apart from knowledge of Psychology, they also need to have grounding in anthropology & sociology. The diff. bet. PC & SCA is the deg. of direct involvement. Direct Involvement has many advantages. (i) It helps psychologists understand natives' perspective better

(ii) Help in clarifying his doubts

(iii) Allow to initiate change on pilot basis

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and look for the results before involving much wider section of community.

(iv) When Psychologists become an integral feature of community in question, they can overcome the problems posed by vested interests easily.

* Major areas of Research

(i) Social Problems

- Discrimination & prejudice
- Poverty & unemployment
- Education of minority students
- Relationship bet. community members & law enforcement agencies
- substance Abuse
- HIV & AIDS

(ii) Stress & Mental Health

- relationship bet. Stress coping, mental health, social support & well being.

(iii) Community & QoL

- Role of community in contributing to the quality of life of an individual as well as the community as a whole.
- How community settings affect QoL
- a) Self Help Groups
- b) faith Based Organisations
- c) Voluntary Associations
- d) Block Associations

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They will provide individual & citizens the niche in which they can find meaning → by contributing to well being of others.

(iv) Sense of Community

↳ belongingness & connectedness to the larger group.

Very imp. in community Psychology → Context & Diversity

→ Social Change

→ Small Groups in social Action

- Social Change

(i) Barriers to social change in India

(ii) ~~W~~ Models of Social change

(iii) How it is Conceptualised by diff. approaches

- Social Change → Changes in structure & functioning of the society.

Change → (i) structural

eg. lower classes now part of Decision Making process

(ii) Positional

↳ eg. Sanskritisation & Westernisation

↳ elite emulation

↳ max. changes are positional

⇒ Models → a) Concensus
b) Conflict
c) Dialectical

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(i) Conflict → Karl Marx (Haves & Have Nots) ⇒ Fight to make society equal

(ii) Concensus → Bring one class above without bringing other down → Indian govt.

(iii) Dialectical → MK Gandhi
→ Constructive agitation, passive resistance
→ Bring emotional, spiritual, etc. changes

* Barriers in social Change

(i) Sacrosanct values
(ii) Feudal Mindset
(iii) Role fixation & Boundedness
(iv) Habit
(v) Insecurity
(vi) Traditional Ideologies
(vii) Fear of unknown
(viii) Absence of transformational leadership
(ix) Rejection of Outsiders
(x) Low self esteem & efficacy of disempowered groups

a) Critical Awareness
b) Participatory Competence
} → To bring social change

⇓

• Develop self efficacy & collective efficacy.

⇒ Theory of Reasoned Action & Planned Beh.

⇒ MK Gandhi → increased Critical Awareness & Participatory Competence
→ His credibility was high

* Mohammad Younis → Gramin Bank (in Bangladesh)

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Models of Social Change

(i) Social Action

(ii) Community Development

(iii) Raising community consciousness

(iv) Policy Research & Advocacy

(i) Social Action

↳ Alinsky ⟶ researched on 2 events ⟶ a) Rest Room
b) Shop In

↳ based on MK Gandhi

↳ To bring a change ⟶ bottom up → Social Action
or
top down

↳ full fledged citizen involvement

a) Rest Room Exp.

↳ Chicago Airport → policy to not give jobs to blacks

↳ Blacks wrote to the authorities for jobs → No response

↳ Blacks went inside the restrooms & bolted the doors ⟶ as their was no policy against it.

↳ This led to over pressure on the restrooms of aircrafts

↳ This led to conflicts in the aircraft

↓

Airport was closed

⇒ Social Change

- Walmart also had the same policy
  ↳ Blacks used to go in large nos. on Saturdays & do window shopping.
  ↳ White people stopped going there.

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→ Eventually pressure was put → Social Change Happened

SA identifies specific obstacles to the empowerment of the disadvantaged groups & creates a constructive conflict to remove these obstacles through direct non-violent action.

- Saul Alinsky delineated social action principle in his classic 'Rules for Radicals', he argued that social power comes in 2 forms

a) Organised Money
b) " People

The former can be opposed if inventive techniques are used by the latter. Acc to Saul Alinsky, for social action to be successful, 3 things are required:

(i) Citizens must identify their capacity & strengths.
(ii) They must identify capacity of opposing forces.
(iii) They need to identify a situation that dramatises the need for change & also calls for a constructive citizen's role. If in the situation, there is something that the opponents have never encountered before, they are likely to be caught in the wrong foot & the social action campaign is likely to yield desired results.

(ii) Policy Research & Advocacy

It involves conducting research & seeking to influence the decision & the policy of the govt. or the concerned organisation. It involves framing social problems in a way that multiple options can be generated to find the solutions & solutions then can be implemented on the larger scale.

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It also involves persuasion particularly the use of fear appeal to bring about necessary beh. change.

(iii) Community development

→ coalition is established

→ It is the process by which relationship bet. community members are strengthened so that the members become more empowered to define the problem & allocate resources thereby leading to community based solutions Community Dev. Approach attempts to broaden opportunities for participation & influence community decision making.

It is an effective means of increasing citizen participation as it builds personal connection bet. them & also a sense of community among the citizens & therefore can sustain long term commitment.

→ Involvement of all the citizens

(iv) Raising Community Consciousness

↳ Critical Awareness

↳ It is critical awareness of social conditions about the society in which one lives. Raising community consciousness not only calls for awareness building but also developing in people the zeal & enthusiasm to translate their awareness into desired social action. Consciousness raising is a multi step process beginning with

a) No awareness

b) Denial & insisting that it is a local problem.

c) Vague awareness of the problem without any effort to address it

d) Pre planning & local info. gathering about the problem.

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(v) Preparing strategies for community change led by the local team.

(vi) Initiating prog. or policy changes to address the problem

(vii) Est. changes within the local organisation such as panchayat, school, etc.

(viii) Evaluating & improving the strategies over time.

(ix) Maintaining strong prog. support by reinforcing the desired changes.

* Small Groups in Social Change

Problems in a change → (i) Diffusion of responsibility
↓
less in small group as (ii) face to face interaction

(iii) Norm enforcement is easy
(iv) Informal settings more
(v) More accountability
(vi) Group Decision Making

- Problem → Group Think

eg. Army → Platoons have defeated Brigades at times

- Small group → more risk taking ability

- Crosbie

↳ He defined small group as a collection of people who meet more or less regularly in face to face interaction, possess common identity or exclusiveness of purpose and who share a set of standards governing their activities.

Small groups differ from large groups in that they involve face to face interaction. They are an imp. element of social structure of the larger

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group & they can help to bring about social transformation. The norms of the larger society are taught to the individuals by small groups as the part of socialisation process. Society is highly dependent on small groups to influence social norms. Society recreates itself through the medium of small groups. People's sense of belongingness to the larger society is dependent on small groups & alienation is caused when an individual's membership in a small group is finished.

- Small groups facilitate social Action in following ways:

(i) They are responsible for socialising individuals into norms & values of the larger society.

(ii) They are the mechanisms for social control of individual's beh.

(iii) They provide the mechanism by which larger society can harness personal motivation of the individual to organisational & social goals.

(iv) They provide large organisations with decision making & problem solving mechanisms.

(v) Small groups are the society's basic source for new elements in its culture.

(vi) Many individual events that ultimately become societal events have their inception in small groups.

(vii) The informal small groups that come up within large organisations, sometimes through their informal network operate to pursue organisational goals where formal procedures fail.

Thus, small groups are responsible for social continuity as well as social change. Society is dependent on small groups for its society

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→ In small group

↓

Relatedness need would be fulfilled

↓

Zone of Acceptance would be increased

⇒ Pressure groups are small groups

↳ This can be both +ve & -ve

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